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A
DIALOGUE

Between A

Japoneſe and a *Formoſan*,

About ſome Points of

The RELIGION of the TIME.

Price One Shilling.

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DICTIONARY

OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AND
OF THE
PROVERBS

OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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A *North*
DIALOGUE

Between A
*J*APONESE
AND A
FORMOSAN,

About some Points of
The RELIGION of the TIME.

By G. P^{sal}-manaazar
m-r.

Quid rides
Fabula

L O N D O N :
Printed for BERNARD LINTOTT
at the *Cross-Keys* next *Nando's*
Coffee-House, *Fleetstreet*. 1707.

DIARY

1880

1881

1882



The History of the Town

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

TH E chief Thing I purpose in the following Lines, is to vindicate the Japonese from that unjust Character this Part of the World is pleased to give them, viz. of being a People much given to Superstition. What Reasons they had who first spoke so of them, I cannot tell, but this I am sure of, that no People under the Sun are farther from it than they are, as will more fully appear by the following Dialogue.

'Tis true indeed, the meaner sort of People are wholly led by Priestcraft, and so are made to believe what the Bonzes please; But as for the finer and better Sort, they

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would have you to know they scorn to captivate their Reasons to a few Writings of their Law-givers, construed and altered (as they humbly conceive) by the Priests, whose Interest is to keep People in the greatest Ignorance and Subjection.

I hope therefore that my setting of 'em in a fair Light, will be taken by the World as a great Argument of my Candor and Generosity; and having this Colloquium fresh still in my Memory, which I know will go a greater Way by far in vindicating them than all I could say of my own Head, I thought it would agree better with the Character I hope to gain by this, to publish it just as I heard it, because you have here the Japanner standing up for his Nation, as well as himself, and also a Formosan making

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making his Objections with the Japonese's Answers to them ; so that the whole Matter being justly and impartially laid before you, the Reader may the better judge as he shall see meet, and that I take to be the only honest way of dealing with Readers.

And I must confess, that tho' I was Conscious of my Ignorance of the English Tongue, yet I would by no means suffer any Body to methodize or correct it, because I was afraid lest the Reader should hence find Occasion of suspecting the Sincerity of my Narrative. Wherefore I here must beg of him to excuse all the Faults he shall find in the Language, which he cannot reasonably expect a Stranger to be free from, especially in such a refin'd one, as the English at present is.

*I flatter my self with the Hopes,
that*

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that it will be not a little entertaining, the Questions therein handled bearing so near a Resemblance to the Disputes, which make so much Noise here at present. You'll see a Japanner, who out of meer Friendship and kindness comes to free a Man from the Bondage of Priestcraft, Prejudice, and Ignorance; and on the other side, you'll see a Formosan, like a willing Prisoner, endeavouring to bring his Friend unto the same Condition as he is himself; and both using all the Arguments they are Masters of towards effecting their Design.

*However, that the Reader may not expect more of me than he is likely to find at the long run, and so be obliged to throw away the Book in a Fury, it will be very necessary to tell him, that tho' I was so fortunate to be present at the opening
of*

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of the Conference, yet I ~~was~~ unluckily call'd away upon some very earnest Business, so that I could not stay for the Conclusion, which was however so near at Hand, that if he will take the same Liberty of guessing as I have done, he'll be able to find out which way the Victory turned: However, 'twill still answer my Design, which is to vindicate the Japanner, when the Reader observes him all along arguing not like a Bigot, but like a Man of a free born Understanding.

One Favour more I must beg of my Reader, is, that if he finds either of my Disputants to be out in his Logick, Philosophy, or Divinity, he would not think the worse of me, or think me guilty of the same Errors in my private Opinions; as v. g. if one of them should happen to affirm Fire to be

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hot, contrary to the Modern Philosophers, who affirm it to be cold : For as I have resolved not to omit any of their Arguments, or diminish the Strength of 'em, so neither will I add any thing to it ; but such Blunders as they shall commit, let them answer for themselves.

A Dialogue

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A

DIALOGUE

Between A

Japoneſe and a Formoſan,

About ſome Points of

The RELIGION of the TIME.

Formoſan.

SIR, you are heartily welcome to *Formoſa*, it is ſo long ſince we were bleſt with your Company, that I almoſt deſpair'd ever of enjoying it again.

Japoneſe.

Sir, I value yours ſo much, that had I not been detain'd by Buſineſs, I had not been ſo great a Stranger : But to tell you the Truth, I fell into the Acquaintance of ſome Gentlemen of great Parts, who made me freely acquainted with ſome new Notions of theirs which

(2)

put me for some time into a brown Study, till at last, partly by their help, and partly by my own Application, I came to settle my Mind on the Matter.

Formosan.

Now you talk of Learned Men, pray give me leave to ask you how your Friend does?

Japonefe.

Meaning who?

Formosan.

Why, the Priest that was here last time with you; do not you remember?

Japonefe.

Oh yes! Why I think he's well; but have seen him but once since I was here last: For you must know we fell out mightily that time upon certain Points of Religion; and I believe never will be reconciled; at least I never will with him, whatever he does with me.

For-

Formosan.

How, fallen out with a Priest? I am sorry for that, with all my Heart. I thought you had more Respect for Men of his *Robe* and *Dignity*.

Japonesse.

A Fig for their Dignity and all that belongs to them; they shall never catch me with such Chimeras again, I'll promise you; I have been their Fool and Slave long enough, to my shame be it spoken; but now, I thank my Stars, I am grown a little wiser, and have shook off the Yoak, and set my self free from their pretended Authority; and to be plain with you, this is the very Business: These Gentlemen I was telling you of, communicated me, and which indeed did give me no little Trouble; but I am at present so satisfied of the Priest's Confidence in claiming any Authority, that I wonder how any Man can be so besotted as to acknowledge it. Neither is this my Opinion only, but also that of the greatest Wits of our Age; tho' indeed, I must own, it never broke out so plainly as it has done within these Two Years, yet you must needs think it had been a long while a brewing before. *For-*

Formosan.

This is a sudden alteration indeed, and such as I little dreamed of ; but for G--d's sake, Sir, do you consider what you are a doing ? Do not you know that Priests derive their Authority from the Law-givers, and their Law-givers from God ? So that you cannot deny that of the one, without rebelling at the same time against the Two others.

Japonefe.

Pho ! One may see plain enough : You live in a Land of Darknes and Ignorance, wholly influenced by Priestcraft ; were you but to live 3 Months in *Tedo* or *Meako*, you would see what a refined Air we breath, and what a Learned Age we live in ; and I don't doubt but the changing of Climate would make you alter your Notions. You cannot go into any Book-seller's Shop, but you may see there some Books against the Authority of the Priests ; nay, even of the Law-givers themselves ; so that in a short time, I hope, we'll send them both a packing, which

which Work, if once done, will immortalize this Generation; insomuch, that I would not for the whole Empire be to be born in the next.

Formosan.

Nay if these be the Effects of your Climate, I'll e'en tarry at home.

Japoneſe.

You may do what you please for that, but I'll assure you what I say is positively true; and the Authority of the Law-givers as well as of the Priests is sinking down as fast as ———

Formosan.

You fill me with wonders, I protest ——— What, all the Writings of the Law-givers which have been so long in the greatest Veneration and Credit, opposed now with such Violence? I thought it was so well grounded, and so universally received, so well confirm'd by Miracles, that it was not in the Power of Man to overthrow it. But pray what Arguments do they make use of to overthrow the Authority of such great Men as *Amida, Xakha, Camba-*
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doxi, and the rest, who have ever been reverenc'd as Gods from the Time of their leaving the World ? And what do the Priests say to all these ? Do they not oppose it with all their Strength and Might ? I should think 'tis their Interest as well as their Duty.

Japonesse.

There have been a few who have endeavour'd to do it, but after such a way, that it does more Good than Disservice to our Cause. The generality of them hold their Tongues ; but however, this is agreed on by all the judicious Persons, that our Arguments are unanswerable. I should have told you, that there is one (not a Priest) who pretends to answer it not all at once, but piece by piece ; viz. to Day one, to Morrow another ; but his Character is already so blackned —

Formosan.

I suppose by some of your Party on purpose to render him odious, and so hinder People from reading his Papers. But pray what are these Arguments of yours, that you say all judicious Persons

sons own to be unanswerable, how do you know but if they appear so to me, I'll be one of your Profelytes?

Japonesse.

My Arguments! You mistake me, Sir, I do not give them you as my own, neither would I have you to think that I am of their Mind, for they go upon one Ground and I upon another: Besides, I don't carry the thing so far by half as they do, I do assure you; but however you shall hear what they say.

First says one, If the Writings of *Amida*, *Xakha*, *Cambadoxi*, and other Law-givers do give the least Authority to the Priests over the People, then we may safely say, they are of their own inventing; or else these Law-givers in the stead of being encouraged and admired while alive, and deified and worshipped after their Deaths, deserved rather to be punished and made to suffer the most ignominious Deaths that ever Slave was put to, as being Usurpers of that Power lodg'd in every Man.

Formosan.

What Power do they mean ?

Japonefe.

Why, Sir, you must know they'll have it to be, that neither Kings, nor God himself has any Power over Men, but what they have receiv'd from them. Now what do you say to this ?

Formosan.

So then God's Dominion and Power over us is as much denied as that of the Priests ; Is it not what I told you from the first, that we could not refuse our Submission to the latter, without turning Rebels to the former ? However, I did not much wonder at People rebelling against the Priests. But that Men should attack God's Authority so publicly, is something amazing to me. For I never thought that Men in their Senses would go to deny that as they had to their Cost so often felt ; I mean the Judgments he has sent to Men for their Sins. The *Chineses* tell us of an universal Flood : We can produce some such Punishments

ments in our History ; and as for yours, it is brimful of 'em. Now this is a certain Sign of God's Power over us. Therefore either we must say, that it was evilly gotten, namely, by Usurpation ; or else we must submit to it.

Besides, Reason as well as the Writings of the Law-givers tells us indeed, that God did give us Being, but not that he did give us any Power over it, and much less that we gave it him back again ; and if we have not this Power in us, how can we pretend to give it to Kings, or any Body else ? No Body can give what he has not himself.

But farther, granting that Reason goes very near to tell us, that we have a Power over our selves ; yet if the Writings of our Prophets, whom we have all the Reasons in the World to believe were sent from God, do assure us of the contrary ; ought not our Reason to give place to them ? Besides, that same Reason that tells me I have that Power, tells me also, that he who gave me Being, gave me that Power over it ; and if so he can take it from us when ever he pleases ; So that which

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way soever we look, we'll find *God's Power and Authority to be over all his Works.*

One thing I wonder mightily at, is, that neither the Emperor, nor the High Priests should hinder such Doctrines from taking Ground : For, if People are once perswaded that the Power of Kings and Priests is derived from the People, nothing can hinder them from withdrawing it when ever they see Occasion ; so that neither of 'em can be safe on their Thrones.

Then as to the Argument, *viz.* that if the Writings of *Amida, &c.* does give any Power to the Priests, then it is of their own inventing, is to me not only a very bold, but also a most senseless Assertion. For how is it possible, that such a Nation as yours should have all these Stories imposed upon you by a few Priests ; nay, not only yours, but also other neighbouring Nations, such as *China, Tartary, &c.* in a Time when Learning seemed to flourish in every one of 'em, erected, and made other Countries erect Statues

to these pretended Gods ; suppose their Writings, which, as it might be made appear the *Chineses* themselves copied while the Authors of them were alive, all these and several other Circumstances make it a Demonstration to me, that it was not in the Power of the Priests to put such notorious Cheats upon so many Nations together.

Neither can it be said, that the Priests did alter these Writings ; for as I told you before, so many other People having had Copies of 'em from the Beginning, and kept 'em ever since ; and since they do all agree, it is unreasonable to think that ever they did suffer the least Corruption.

Besides, do but consider the various Sects, that are and have been in *Japan* ever since the Departure of the Law-givers, which Sects are in continual Disputes one with another about some Points of Religion. These Disputes do not arise from any Difference of the Copies, but from the Darkness of the Writings. Now had any one of the Sects gone to make any Alteration

tion to serve their Turn, the others would have immediately exposed them, or done the same themselves, neither of which can be proved. Therefore it must be owned that these Writings are the same that *Amida*, *Xakha*, &c. wrote themselves.

And since it does appear by all the Circumstances that accompanied their Lives, as well during, as before and after it, that they were Men sent from the Great GOD to give Laws, and to establish his Worship: And since, as I have proved, GOD has a Power over his Creatures, if these Prophets did claim any to themselves, we ought to think that they had it from GOD, and that whomsoever they did communicate it to, might justly, nay, were bound to exercise it in their several Stations. Which leads me to the rest of the Argument, namely, that if *Amida*, &c. are the true Authors of these Writings, they deserv'd to be put to Death for pretending to any Authority, or to give it to others; which is indeed a very severe and unjust Sentence; For these that were sent
from

from GOD must surely know better to whom that Power belonged, and consequently could lay the surer Foundations; and yet we see that they were so far from pretending to any Authority, in Matters of Civil Government, that they renounced it as contrary to their Profession; nay, they enjoind all their Followers to obey those that were put in Authority over 'em; and settled the King's Rights upon the best and surest Foundations that ever were, *viz.* on God's Authority and Commands, his Rewards and Punishments. Now therefore, since all the Authority they claim, is only concerning Spiritual Matters, can any body be so unjust as to think them guilty of Death? Or so incredulous as to refuse them their Obedience, and shut their Eyes to the great Proofs they bring of their just Right to such Authority?

Japanese.

But, Sir, hear what another Learned Author says to this, " There being
 " such great Reasons for respecting
 " and reverencing those Men who are
 sent

“ sent from GOD; this might very
 “ well have pushed on some proud,
 “ ambitious Fellows to pretend to such
 “ Mission : But however (continueth
 “ he) if these Men do claim to them-
 “ selves any Power over Men, we may
 “ justly and lawfully suspect them.

Formosan.

What I have said to the last Argu-
 ment will in some Measure answer this ;
 however, I'll add this, that as it is not
 these Men's bare Saying they are sent
 from God, that ought to make us
 believe them so ; neither can such a silly
 Exception as that of their pretending
 to some Authority, be a sufficient Pre-
 tence for our rejecting of 'em. Every
 Man that pretends to be sent from
 God, must do something to confirm
 his Mission : Wherefore we see that all
 of 'em have wrought some kind of Mi-
 racles, then is it left to us to judge
 whether these Miracles were real and
 true ones, such as none but GOD, or
 them whom his Hand was with could
 work, or whether they were meer jug-
 ling Tricks. Now, that there have
 been some of the latter Stamp, every
 where

where must be owned, because they have been discovered; and some received their Punishment in this World. But however, this can never be an Argument against the former. What Miracles *Amida*, *Cambadoxy*, &c. have wrought, is sufficiently known to the World, and by every impartial Man own'd to be above every Power but God's. It will be also granted, that God will never help Men in so particular a manner, to deceive People, and confirm an Imposture; it will therefore follow, that these Prophets challenging a Power in Ecclesiastical Matters, can be no sufficient Bulwark against those strong Proofs given us by God himself in behalf of them. How ridiculous then would it look in me, because I believe without any (or to speak more properly) against all Reason, that I am my own King, and that no Body has Power over me, but him whom I give it to, how foolish, I say, would it be in me to go to deny such strong Evidence! Because, forsooth, it contradicts that Notion of mine, and demands that Submission of me, which I thought I did owe no Bo-

dy but whom I pleased to give it freely.

Now farther, I would ask you whether you know of any Law-giver that did not pretend to this Authority, I don't believe you can produce one: So then we must at that Rate throw away all manner of Revelation, and go to the Play of *Blind-mans-buff*, or rather to the Childrens Play of *Hide and Seek*, we must shut our Eyes to this Light we have, and let our shallow Brains go and look for another. Now what can such a short-leg'd Jade as Reason ridden and led by Interest, Self-love, and many other such Blind and Sinister Rulers, find, but a Religion suitable to every one of them, and consequently as far from God as he is from them. You see therefore, that while we endeavour to set Reason free, as we think, we rather make her the more a Slave, and in the stead of one Master, *viz.* GOD, we find her Forty; such as Pride, Ambition, Interest, Self-love, and Four and Thirti more of the like nature.

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To conclude therefore, since we find by woeful Experience, 1. how short-sighted and weak our Reason is, and how unable of it self of finding the right Worship of God; and secondly, that God in Compassion to this our Infirmary, did inspire some Men to come and teach it; and has confirm'd their Doctrine with so many Signs and Wonders, such as do not leave us the least Occasion to doubt of it's coming from him; it will follow, that these inspired Men, as well as their Successors, not only might justly, but also were and are in Duty bound to exercise this Authority which God gave 'em in their several Stations, and all the rest are of Consequence obliged to obey.

Japoneſe.

But now, Sir, my last quoted Author will tell you, that the Door-keeper of the Temple has as much Right to pray, preach, and offer sacrifices to God as the best Priest of 'em all: Therefore they should in the stead of boasting of their Authority, own themselves no better than Ser-

vants hired and payed by the People : For doing of these things that belong to God's Worship, and so, any body that will may as well be a Priest in his own Family, and perform all the Divine Rites there, as well as the Priest at Church.

Formosan.

If the foregoing Arguments had been (as you said, *all ingenious Persons own*) unanswerable, then this would have followed of Course. But as we have stated this Power, *viz.* upon the incontestable Power of the Law-giver, which was immediately and undoubtedly derived from God; their Author had as good tell me, that I have as much Right to go and sit in the Emperor's Privy-Council, or to lead his Army, as those whom he has chosen to it. However, not to take too much upon me, in pretending to know Religion better than your self; You may satisfy your self this way, if by the Writings of the *Law-givers*, and other Authentick Histories, it do not appear that *Amida, Xakha, &c.* chose themselves Successors from among

mong their Disciples, whom, and whom alone they communicated this Power to. But on the contrary, if it does appear, that they gave Power to every one, and that they accordingly made use of it, then your Hypothesis stands firm enough; then the Door-keeper's Cook-maid can claim as much Right as the Priest: but if I mistake not, both the Prophet's Writings, and the History of those Times tell us quite different things: In the First we read, that they chose some Men, whom in a particular manner they invested with that Power of Preaching, and performing the Ceremonies of Divine Worship; and that these Chosen Men did do the same to others as the Doctrine did propagate. In the Second we have no mention of any particular Congregation, which was not with a Priest, not chosen as a *Servant*, but ordained by other Priests in a higher Degree, which has continued from that time till this.

Now if you can from what has been said, find out your Author to be in the right, you had as good be of his Mind still; but if the contrary, then

then I would advise you to put up that Pride of yours, and return to your primitive State, and consider that these Priests are as Ambassadors from God; and consequently ought to keep up their Dignity and Authority without bating one jot of it, considering whom they represent: And if some Envoys have been severely punished by their Sovereigns, for doing of Things unworthy the Persons they represented; much more ought these Vicegerents of God to fear lest by their too much facility, they make the People despise them. Respect we cannot shew 'em too much; but we can, and, I am afraid, generally do shew 'em too little. However, this may always be said for us, that 'tis no Affront either to our Reason or our Manhood, to reverence and obey the Priests under the notion of Legates of the Almighty; because then all our Submission is directly paid to him, whose Power and Authority over us, none but Fools and Madmen can call in question. But, Sir, however I am glad to hear of what you told me, *viz.* that these were none of your Arguments; and I wish they

they may not be your Principles neither : But however, tho' you tell me you don't carry the Thing so far as these Authors ; yet you seem to have but a mean Opinion of the Priests, or rather do intirely rebel against their Authority : Wherefore I should be glad to hear your Complaints against 'em ; for I have more reason to care for you than for those Gentlemen who have drawn you away.

Japonesse.

To be plain with you, Sir, what these Gentlemen and I were alledging against the Priests, was their imposing upon Mens Reasons things quite contrary to it under the notions of Mysteries ; which they must be either Fools for believing , or Kn——s for making others believe. And this was the Thing that I told my *quondam* Friend that time we fell out ; whereupon he was so exasperated at what I said to him, that he went away, and never came to me again ; and I to be sure was not such a Fool to go after him. Now therefore the Grounds I go upon are these ; the Priests cannot stretch their

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Authority beyond the set Bounds of it, without turning Usurpers, Tyrants, Deceivers, &c. Now when they are once liable to all these Denominations, they do no more answer the Intention of him that ordained 'em; and therefore we may safely deny them that Submission which they might have challenged, had they kept within their Compass. Now that they do deserve the aforesaid Appellations, does sufficiently appear by the Absurdities they crowd in their *Creeds*; and oblige every one under pain of Damnation most firmly to believe: Therefore, I hope, you won't condemn me for taking my leave of them.

Formosan.

Before we call 'em all these odious Names, we ought to consider 2 Things; First, whether the Writings on which our Faith is grounded, be true or not: If they be true, whether they oblige us to believe these Mysteries under pain of Damnation? For if they do, then the Priests affirm no more than the Scriptures do. Now as for the Truth of these Writings, I believe we have suffi-

sufficiently settled; neither do you seem to deny that Point. And as for their affirming such Doctrines, any body may be satisfied that reads them.

Japonesse.

What then, if these Writings do tell me Contradictions, and Things that shock my Reason, I must believe them, must I?

Formosan.

But, Sir, do but see how your great Zeal against Contradictions, leads you into a notorious one. You own these Writings to be of Authority, and at the same time say, If they teach me Contradictions? Which is as plain a one as can be.

Japonesse.

Well then, to speak plainer, my Opinion is, that God cannot oblige us to believe Things contrary to Reason: If therefore there is any thing of that nature in these Writings, I'll very fairly reject it.

Formosan.

You must be very sure however, that these Things proposed do imply that Contradiction before you reject them ; for there is no doubt, but if you find fault with one part of the Writings, you do quite overthrow the Credit and Authority of the rest.

Japonefe.

I beg your Pardon for that, I may reject one part of them, and yet believe the other, as fast as you do your whole Creed : For I don't think the whole Mass of Writings to be of that same Authority. Some there be that are undoubtedly and unquestionably true, and of Divine Inspiration ; others that may be reckoned Apocriphas, tho' the Priests would make them pass for Canonical ; and there be others, which are apparently false, which might perhaps have been very true and Authentick when first written ; but afterwards, either by the Carelessness of the Transcribers, or the Malice of the Keepers, have been so corrupted, that at present we may lawfully reject them as false.

For-

Formosan.

As to the first, I can't say much ; there may be Mistakes committed by the Transcribers ; yet I should think there is yet enough left of the Writings in which all Copies do agree to prove these Doctrines ; but as for the latter, *viz.* of their being corrupted by the Keepers, so as to render them liable to Suspicion, I thought I had proved unfeasible. But yet, grant all this, what *Kriterion* will you make use of to know which is which ? That seems to me a very difficult matter ; and if you can furnish me with any Rules for the distinguishing the one from the other, *eris mihi magnus Apollo.*

Japonesse.

Well then, to shew you I am not unprovided with that neither, I'll give you Three Rules, which indeed, are not the Product of my Brain ; for I had 'em from one of our Party, who wrote sometime ago a Book concerning *Inspiration*. The whole would be worth your Reading ; and if you did, I don't believe you would go away with your Bigotry, but to the Rules.

The First is, that *Amida* being the greatest Law-giver, the greatest Demi-god, and all the rest being only Witnesses, as 'twere to him, we are obliged to believe no more than *Amida's* own Writings, and that with this

Second Rule, that we ought to believe no more even of *Amida*, but what we find all the Copies to agree in; and whatever we find in one of the Copies which is not, or is otherwise in another, that we may safely reject.

The Third Rule is, that when we have summon'd up all that the Copies do agree in, I mean of *Amida's* only; we are bound to believe no more of that neither than we find agreeable to our Reason. Now these be the Three Rules ———

Formosan.

And very good ones too, I protest :
But, Sir, do you not perceive what a *Credulous* Man you are grown, when even you intend to be the Reverse? you will not believe what God has revealed,

vealed, because it seems to you against your Reason? But you can take these Rules, nay, I am confident a great part of your Gentlemen, as well as your self, can believe Things upon the Authority of another Man. Now, what would you think if a Man should overthrow these your Rules you depend so much on?

Japonefe.

I should think he has at once undone what another has been a long while a hamering, but that I think impossible.

Formosan.

However, 'tis worth aiming at; and to begin, your Author says that *Amida* being the greatest God, and the rest only Witnesses to him; you'll believe the former, but not the latter; that's a Contradiction: For First, before you can believe in *Amida*, you must be sure that those that witnessed of him are true Prophets, and do not lie: And then how can you unbelieve that again.

Secondly, these Witnesses did prove the Truth of their Testimony by Signs
and

and Miracles, as well as *Amida*, and consequently their Authority must be equal, as being both confirmed by God; for a Thing, let it be ever so true, can amount to no more than a Truth: I'll allow you therefore that *Amida* is a greater Hero in Dignity, but not in Credit than the rest.

Thirdly, You know very well that *Amida* refers the Authority of his Mission to the Prophets that were before him, and bore witness of him; so that if any of the Two may be questioned, it should be the former. Besides, we see that *Amida* speaks with all the Respect in the World of these Law-givers, commends them, and in short, bears as much witness of them as they did of him: Now that a Man may be mistaken in another Man, may be well said; but that a Prophet inspired by God should give a good Character to an Impostor, is absurd; therefore the Authority of both, depending so much upon one another, we cannot pull out one of the Pillars without bringing the whole House upon our Heads.

As to your Second Rule, *viz.* that you'll have all the Copies agree in one Article before you believe it, I'll tell you what the Consequence of it will be ; you must first take the Trouble to romage all the extant Copies, compare them very exactly, which by the way is no easy task, before you can settle your Religion ; which, when done, may be in a little time altogether destroyed : For it is but bribing some Booksellers or Transcribers to make a new Copy, contradicting one of your settled Articles ; then off must it go out of the Book, till at last by throwing out one Article after another, you proceed Religionless.

And your Third Rule, *viz.* of believing nothing but what is agreeable to your Reason, is as comical a one as ever was invented : For first, if it is a true one, and may be depended on, what need is there for the Two foregoing ones ? If you'll believe nothing but what appears to you reasonable, you need not trouble your self who it is that writ these Things, nor whether

ther the Copies do agree in : For let the Author be who he will, let the Copies contradict one another ever so much, what is agreeable to Reason, will be so still for all that, and consequently will challenge our Belief.

2dly, this is asmuch as if you should say, I'll believe no more of these Lawgivers than I will of any other Man, nay, less : For when to my knowledge, you have been told by several Men, that in very cold Countries they had seen the Water grow so hard, that a Cart went over it : You have believ'd it upon the Honesty of these Relators ; tho' I don't know how you'll make this and Reason agree.

If so, what need have you to talk so much of Inspiration, Divine Authority, &c. since it appears by this Rule that *Amida*, *Xakba*, and whosoever do pretend to any, may e'en go whistle with it : You'll assoon, if not rather believe any honest Men, as you will them with all their Divine Inspiration. You had as good therefore coin your
Three

Three Rules into this one, viz. *That we are not obliged to make a Distinction between a Man sent from God, and an honest Learned Man, that speaks of his own Head ; but believe as much of either as our Reason will admit.*

What Necessity was there then for God's working so many and great Miracles, to confirm the Doctrine he revealed unto us, if after all, it is left to every body to serve it as People do a Market, chuse what best pleases their Palate, and leave the rest for less nice Customers ; we might all have done that without the help of one single Miracle.

Farther, if God designed to reveal nothing to us but what was agreeable to our Reason, then that very Revelation was needless ; for our Reason could have found it out of it self : But however, let that pass as a Supposition, because it is not much to the present purpose whether it be true or no ; this will however follow, that without the Help of any Supernatural Conviction, we might have given our

Assent to such reasonable Propositions..

My Opinion therefore is, that these Law-givers were to declare to us something above Reason ; for which the Power of working Miracles was given them, that they might challenge our Belief to a Thing which Reason doth not comprehend ; which when declar'd unto us, we must not expect to understand better than before ; they will be above our Reach still, as the Men who told you of the Water growing hard in cold Countries ; they gained indeed your Assent as to the matter of Fact ; but as to the manner how, they left you as ignorant as they found you.

Besides, you must own that the Name of *Mystery* is used in the Writings of the Law-givers ; under what Notion must we understand it ? Can we say, that what they call great and high Mysteries, are only Things agreeable to Reason, but only more Sublime than the common Truths ? Still does not this answer the Notion of *Mystery*. Let us therefore con-

conclude, that when the Priests do teach us any thing that is above our Reason, under the Notion of Mysteries, they do no more than the Law-givers themselves have done: And if these Doctrines were Mysteries to them that had, besides Divine Inspiration, a great many other Advantages we want, well may they be so unto us, and well may we be thought very presumptuous to reject them, because our shallow Reason can't reach them.

Let me therefore make bold to give you the following Advice.

First, always to distinguish those Things that are above Reason, from those that are against it. We call that Thing against Reason, that contradicts our former Ideas, framed on a due Consideration, or on self-evident Principles; as for Instance, to say that Fire is cold, is against Reason; because we have upon good Grounds conceived the Idea of Fire, as of a hot Thing. But when we come to speak of God, and of his Nature, there is nothing can properly be said to contradict our Idea,

because we never did frame one that we could say was to be depended upon.

Now if we are to set so great Value upon those Ideas our Reason has framed, how come Men all generally to agree in the Worship of God, which is certainly against those Ideas we had or ought to have framed of him. The Worship of God consists in praising of him, in praying to him for what we stand in need of, and in giving Thanks for what we have received. The Idea we have of a God, is of a Being infinitely Good, Merciful, Just, &c. We reckon up all the Excellencies that we find in Men, and attribute them to God in an infinite manner. When then we praise God, and tell of his Attributes, may not that shock his Modesty as praising a Man before his Face. To pray to him for any Blessings, contradicts the Ideas we had of his Goodness and Liberality. He is no generous Person, that knows another to be in Necessity, and will not relieve him till he asks for it : And so to give Thanks to a generous Spirit for any Favour, is a kind of an Affront to them, like praising

praising of 'em; and much more to God, if we follow our Ideas before fram'd. I wonder therefore, that it never came into your Heads to abolish the Worship of God, as contrary to Reason; and then you'll have a very lazy Religion, and a good Time on't.

Nay, what do you think to believe that God is a Spirit, is not that quite contradicting all the Ideas we had fram'd? And that same may also be said of believing God to be Infinite, Eternal, &c. For our Understanding is too little to receive any Ideas, but what are limited to Time, Place, &c. and Infinity, Eternity, being infinitely too large to squeeze into such narrow Compass, are forced to lie without Doors. Farther, ask that Reason of yours that will believe nothing that contradicts it, how she comes to believe God's *Essence* and his Attributes, to be the same without Composition; for it is certain, it will always apprehend his Wisdom and Power as distinct, his *Justice* and *Mercy* as opposite. How can we believe God to be intire in all Places, and yet not circumscribed to
any

any; that he penetrates all Substance, and is mixed with none; that he understands without the Reception of any *Idea*; that he loves without Passion, is angry without Disturbance, repents without Change, and so many other Perfections that are essential to his Godhead; ask your Reason, I say, whether it does fully understand them, and it will answer negatively; why then do you believe 'em. It is evident therefore, that it was left even to Reason to clip Religion, till it thought it enough, it would not cease, till it had made it imperceptible to the nicest Eye.

Secondly, before we can positively affirm, that a Proposition implies a Contradiction, we must be sure, that the contradictory Idea we had fram'd before, is well grounded. For Instance, before we can say, that 'tis a Contradiction to affirm that the Sun is cold or dark, we must be sure that he is both hot and light. But when we come to speak of Things above Reason's reach, we cannot say, that the Doctrine of *Amida* concerning God,

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contradicts our Reason, because we can never be so confident of our former Notion of his Being; but we may reject them upon better Authority, without offering any Affront to our Reason: Therefore, tho' we might very well think our Notions extraordinary good and firm at first, *i. e.* before the Revelation; yet when God's Authority comes and tells us the contrary, I think *Reason* her self will think it most *reasonable* to give place.

Thirdly, how do you know but one time or other, if not here, at least in the next World, our Understandings will be opened so, that (tho' at present they cannot so much as see the possibility of these *Arcana*) yet, then they shall see all these plainly, even so far as to be ashamed of our Dulness, while on this side the Grave; and yet this is the Promise of one of the Disciples of *Amida*.

What a heavy Rout would not a raw, untaught, Country Plow-man make, if you should go to perswade him that the World turneth round as
Meat

Meat round the Spit ! How many Objections would he make, which tho' to you would appear very silly and impertinent, yet to him would seem very wise and substantial ones : Now how do you know, but whilst you are crying out *Absurdity ! Absurdity !* those blessed Men who for ought we know are already admitted to the Sight of all these Things we see here but thro' a Glass, darkly, would laugh, or at least, which would be more agreeable to their State, pity us for our Blindness ; but much more for our Incredulity, if they were to behold our wise Proceedings here !

How many Things are there which have appeared contrary to Reason, impossible, &c. which either by a more mature Consideration, or by experience, have been made as clear as the Sun ! And if we may be allow'd to compare mean little Things to great ones, I'll tell you a Story, not foreign to our purpose. A Gentleman in Europe, having a mind to make himself merry with some of his Fellow-Mathematicians, came one Day to 'em
with

with a chearful Countenance, and told them, He had found the way to make an Egg stand on end on a Table, without any other Support at all; upon which they all stood amaz'd; and after having debated the Matter seriously, they voted it *Nemine Contradicente* impossible, and thought he was in jest; wherefore to shew he was in earnest, took the Egg, and broke one end flat, and so set it to stand upon the Table.

Japonesse.

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Formosan.

When they saw the Thing done, the next Word one spoke, was, I could have done it. Bless me! cries another, that I should not have thought on't. You see, by this, a Thing which appeared impossible to a whole Company of truly learned Men, which when shewn, nothing seems easier; I need not make any Application.

A certain Gentleman of your Party wrote a Book in vindication of your

G

Opi-

Opinion, and concludes with these Words, That he refers his farther Conviction till the next World. I would not advise you to do the same, it will not be time then. And I had as good fancy first, that a Man may be saved without Holiness, and so wallow in Sin all his Life-time, and refer his farther Conviction, and if need be his Conversion till the Day of Judgment; I think their Case would not be much unlike, unless it be that the first might have more Right to plead Ignorance than the latter: You see I have been obliged to stand up for your Religion, as much as if it had my own, and that because we in our Religion have our Mysteries as well as you in yours; and are bound to obey, respect and reverence our Priests as well as you yours. But what was you going to say, for I have done?

Japanese.

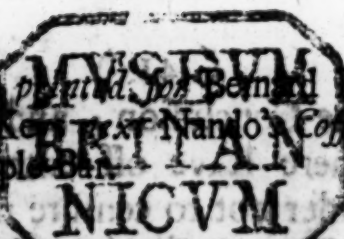
But now, Sir —————

Here at last we are come to that fatal Minute, in which I was unfortunately call'd away without staying to

to see the Conclusion ; and therefore I must here leave off entreating the kind Reader not to censure me for making the *Japanner* begin a Speech, and not end it ; as if I should go by the common Proverb , which says, that Parish-Clerks , Women and Fools will always speak the last Word ; which was very far from my Thoughts ; but intending from the beginning to be as just in this Relation as I could, I thought it would be took as an Argument of my great Sincerity, not to omit even Three such insignificant Words as, *But now, Sir,*

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